

Russian Military Action in Syria a 'Terrible Mistake': Cameron

MANCHESTER - British Prime Minister David Cameron said on Sunday that Kremlin chief Vladimir Putin's decision to take military action in Syria to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was a "terrible mistake". Russia has begun striking targets in Syria - a dramatic escalation of foreign involvement in the civil war which has been criticized by some as an attempt to prop up Assad, rather than its purported aim of attacking Islamic State militants. "They are backing the butcher Assad, which is a terrible mistake for them and for the world," Cameron



on told the BBC on the first day of his Conservative Party's annual conference

in the northern English city of Manchester. "It's going to make the region

more unstable, it will lead to further radicalization and increased terrorism. I

would say to them 'change direction, join us in attacking ISIL.' Russia says it is

targeting hardline Islamic State militants, but Cameron questioned that position. "Most of the Russian air strikes, as far as we've been able to see so far, have been in parts of Syria not controlled by ISIL (Islamic State), but controlled by other opponents of the regime," he said. Cameron is keen for Britain to begin its own air strikes in Syria, joining allies in a U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State, a self-declared caliphate spanning large areas of Syria and neighboring Iraq. British bombing as part of the coalition so far has only targeted Is ... (More on P4)...(22)

Pro-, Anti-Immigration Protests Staged in Finland

HELSINKI - A total of nearly 1,500 people participated in the pro- and anti-immigration demonstrations on Saturday in several places of Finland, reported local media. In Helsinki, the capital of Finland, the demonstrations caused emotional conflicts by the two groups of protesters with opposing views. The "Close Borders" anti-immigration demonstration attracted more than 200 people, while nearly 400 participated in the "Open Finland" anti-racism protest in Helsinki. During the events, some people threw eggs to the police officers and kicked police cars. One was arrested for kicking a police car and breaking a lamp on the car.

At the same time, similar demonstrations were held in Lahti, around 100 km north of Helsinki, with more than 800 participants, and in Tornio, northern Finland, with about 400 people. The police said the protests in these two places went almost peacefully. Some 300 protesters took part in similar demonstrations in Tampere, a major city in south central Finland. The anti-immigration one was named "Close Borders", while the anti-racism one was named "Zero Tolerance to Racism". (Xinhua)

Syria and Allies will Win, Failure would be Devastating : Assad

BEIRUT - Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said a military campaign by Russia, Syria and its allies will decide the fate of the Middle East, and a year of U.S.-led air strikes against Islamic State militants had only helped the spread of terrorism. In an interview with Iranian television broadcast on Sunday, Assad said if Syria, Russia, Iran and Iraq unite in battling terrorism their efforts would yield practical results. He was speaking days after Russian jets, based in western Syria, launched air strikes against targets Moscow has identified

as Islamic State bases, but which Assad's opponents say disproportionately hit rival, foreign-backed insurgents. "The chances of this alliance's success are big, not small," Assad said, adding that failure would mean "we face the destruction of the whole region". He said a campaign of Western and Arab air strikes against Islamic State targets in Iraq and Syria had been counterproductive and terrorism had spread both in terms of territory and new recruits. Syria's conflict grew out of protests against As-



saad's rule in early 2011, which were put down by force and then turned violent, drawing in regional opponents and supporters of the Syrian leader. Efforts to find a political solution to the civil war have so far proven

fruitless, with most rebel fighters demanding Assad's departure as a precondition for talks. Western states also say Assad must step aside, though most have softened their stance to say he could play some role in a transition period. (Reuters)

Oman Calls for Support for UN Envoys in Syria, Yemen

UNITED NATIONS - Parties to the conflicts in Syria and Yemen should support the UN's special envoys in their efforts to reach a peaceful settlement, Oman said here Saturday. "We call upon all political forces in Yemen to support the efforts of UN secretary-general's special envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, to contribute in restoring peace and stability," Oman's foreign minister, Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, told the annual high-level debate of the UN General Assembly, which opened here Monday. Abdullah said that Oman was following with great concern the developments of the humanitarian crisis in its neighboring country Yemen. Meanwhile, Abdullah called for support

for the UN secretary-general's special envoy in Syria. "We call upon all Syrian parties and neighboring countries to support the task of UN secretary-general's special envoy, Staffan de Mistura, to restore security and stability to this brotherly country, and contribute in eradicating terrorism." He noted that the conflicts in Syria and Yemen

had allowed terrorism to take hold within the region, saying that terrorism "was able to find a foothold in Syria and currently poses a threat (to) regional and international security." "My country reiterates its uncompromising stance in condemning all forms of terrorism, irrespective of their causes and motivations," he added. (Xinhua)

had allowed terrorism to take hold within the region, saying that terrorism "was able to find a foothold in Syria and currently poses a threat (to) regional and international security." "My country reiterates its uncompromising stance in condemning all forms of terrorism, irrespective of their causes and motivations," he added. (Xinhua)

Indian President to Make First Visit to Israel Later this Month

NEW DELHI - Indian President Pranab Mukherjee will visit Israel later this month, sources said Sunday. "President Mukherjee will be the first ever Indian head-of-state to visit Israel. During his visit, at least three pacts are likely to be inked between the two countries. The pacts are likely to be in the fields of water, energy and education," the sources said. Meanwhile Israeli Ambassador to India Daniel Carmon has reportedly

said that president's visit will be a "landmark" one during which both sides will try to expand cooperation in a range of areas. "For many years, our relationship was held under the carpet. Now, they are more visible and open where each side brings to the table each other's advantages. We are so different, yet we are a combined force," he told the media in the national capital. India is the Jewish state's largest buyer ... (More on P4)...(23)

Greece's Ex-Interior Minister Elected Parliament Speaker

ATHENS - Greece's former Interior Minister Nikos Voutsis was elected Sunday as the country's speaker of parliament that emerged from the Sept. 20 elections. The 64-year-old civil engineer was elected with 181 votes in the 300-member parliament with the support of the left-wing radical SYRIZA, the junior party in the current ruling coalition, the right-wing Independent Greeks (ANEL) party, as well as opposition parties.

The ANEL and SYRIZA parties control 155 seats in the parliament. Voutsis succeeds Zoe Konstantopoulou, who became the country's youngest ever parliament speaker with record votes in February. The 38-year-old former SYRIZA parliament member, who ran in the Sept. 20 elections with the anti-bailout Popular Unity party that was formed after a SYRIZA party split over Greece's third bailout program, failed to enter the parliament.



ment. Konstantopoulou was heavily criticized during her term even by SYRIZA legislators over her chairmanship style. Meanwhile, Voutsis, a soft-spoken leftist, has

won the respect of political opponents in his previous terms as the interior minister from January to August in 2015 and as a legislator. He was first ... (More on P4)...(24)

Palestinians Stab Israelis in Two Attacks; PM Calls in Security Chiefs

JERUSALEM - A Palestinian man stabbed and wounded an Israeli teenager in Jerusalem on Sunday, just hours after another knife-wielding attacker killed an off-duty Israeli soldier and a rabbi nearby in the walled Old City, police said. Officers shot dead both attackers, a police spokesman said, and Israel's government announced it was barring Palestinians from entering the ancient district for two days,

apart from people who lived there. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said he would meet security chiefs later on Sunday to discuss more action to tackle a rising wave of violence in East Jerusalem, which includes the Old City, and the West Bank, areas that Israel captured in a 1967 war. The bloodshed - which included a drive-by shooting that killed an Israeli couple in the West ... (More on P4)...(25)

24 Killed in Baghdad Twin Suicide Attacks

BAGHDAD - Up to 24 people were killed and 61 others wounded on Saturday in two suicide car bomb attacks in northern Iraq capital of Baghdad, a police source said. "The latest reports said that 24 people were killed and 61 others wounded by the two suicide car bomb attacks in Kadhmiah district," the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. The attacks occurred at the crowded Adan Square near the entrance of the holy Shiite district of Kadhmiah in

northern Baghdad when one suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden car, the source said. Shortly after, another suicide bomber blew up his car bomb some 50 meters away from the site of the first blast, the source added. Earlier, the source put the toll at 10 killed and 20 others wounded by the two blasts. The huge blasts set several nearby civilian cars on fire while many others were damaged at the scene, according to the source. Iraq has ... (More on P4)...(26)

Neighbour News

China Continues to Issue Alert for Typhoon Mujigae

BEIJING - China issued an orange alert, the second-strongest level, as Typhoon Mujigae landed in Zhanjiang City in Southern Guangdong Province on Sunday afternoon. At 6 p.m., Mujigae, the 22nd typhoon of the year, was heading west from Guangdong for Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and entered Bobai County in Guangxi, packing winds of up to 38 meters per second, the National Meteorological Center (NMC) said. The typhoon is forecast to move northwest at a speed of up to 20 km per hour and die down, the NMC said. Mujigae will continue to bring gales and torrential rain to

the coastal regions of Guangdong, Guangxi and Hainan from Sunday to Monday. The Guangdong provincial government ordered suspension of all maritime travel and entertainment activities. Some 38,900 fishing boats have returned to harbor or nearby shelters in Guangdong. High-speed trains linking Haikou and Sanya, both on Hainan Province, were suspended on Saturday and Sunday. Sixty-eight flights from and to Haikou Meilan International Airport were canceled on Saturday. More than 25,000 fishing boats in Hainan have returned to harbor and 6,955 fishermen have been evacuated. (Xinhua)

Bomb Kills Pro-Government Tribal Elder in NW Pakistan



PESHAWAR - A pro-government tribal elder was killed Sunday and his son was wounded when a roadside bomb hit their vehicle in Pakistan's restive northwest, police said. The attack happened in the town of Bakakhel 150 kilometers (93 miles) south of Peshawar. Malik Sayed Ali Wazir, who headed an anti-Taliban militia in the town, died on the way to hospital while his son was fighting for his life, Tahir Khan, a senior police official in neighbouring Bannu district, told AFP. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the

but attacks on pro-government tribal elders by militants across northwest Pakistan are not uncommon. Bannu also borders the lawless North Waziristan tribal district. Pakistani troops in June last year began a long-awaited drive to clear insurgent bases in the district after a bloody attack by the Pakistani Taliban on Karachi airport sank faltering peace hopes. The army has intensified its offensive since the Taliban's massacre of 153 people, 134 of them children, in a school in Peshawar last December. (Agencies)

Iranian Parliamentary Panel gives Conditional Nod to Nuclear Deal



DUBAI - An committee of Iran's conservative-dominated parliament gave its support on Sunday to Iran's nuclear agreement with world powers on condition there would be no foreign inspections of military sites and no curbs on developing its missile program. These proposals, contained in a report by a special parliamentary committee evaluating the agreement, could become law if passed by the assembly and approved by a top clerical body that vets proposed legislation. Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sept 3 he favored a vote in parliament on the nuclear deal, but it will still go to him, as the coun-

try's highest authority with the ultimate say on all state policy, for approval. Many see the chance of the leadership eventually rejecting the deal as small, since Tehran needs the removal of sanctions to revive its economy. However, while the agreement is meant to last many years, there is a risk it could fall apart one day if Iran or its counterparties determine the terms have been breached. As a result powerful factions in Iran continue to voice scepticism about the accord to try to shield themselves from a politically-damaging backlash in the event that it falls apart. (Reuters)

EU's Schulz, Luxembourg want Looser Deficit Rules to Cope with Refugees



BERLIN - The European Union should loosen its deficit rules due to extra spending caused by a record influx of refugees, the head of the European parliament and Luxembourg's finance minister both said in newspaper interviews on Sunday. Calls for the EU to relax rules which say that states' budget deficits must not exceed 3 percent of gross domestic product are growing as the costs of dealing with refugees mount. Austria has also said Brussels should consider exemptions for the rising cost of looking after refugees. European Parliament President Martin Schulz told a group of German regional newspapers that the influx of refugees was an extraordinary burden that must be taken into account for the deficit criteria. He said: "Given the huge burdens that individual countries are bearing in the refugee crisis, we can't just act like everything is in a normal state." Luxembourg's Finance Minister Pierre Gramegna told German newspaper Handelsblatt that the European Union should loosen its deficit rules due to extra spending caused by the arrival of refugees. "We should neutralize the extra expenses," Gramegna, whose country currently has the EU's rotating presidency, was quoted as saying. He said the refugee crisis was "a real challenge", including financially, and said that asylum policy should be given the highest priority and the EU should take account of it. (Reuters)